

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SANA 02663 130832Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /059 W

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R 130530Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1784

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 2663

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SA, YE

SUBJECT: RECENT TRIBAL DEVELOPMENTS AND SAUDI INVOLVEMENT

1. DURING JULY 11 MEETING WITH FONMIN ADDALLAH AL-ASNAJ TOLD ME THAT DURING PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI'S RECENT TRIP TO RIYADH TRIBAL SITUATION IN NORTH WAS DISCUSSED WITH SAUDI LEADERSHIP. AL-ASNAJ STATED THAT UNFORTUNATELY NO AGREEMENT WAS REACHED BETWEEN AL-HAMDI AND THE SAUDIS CONCERNING THE SITUATION THERE AND PARTICULARLY AL-AHMAR'S CONTINUED OPPOSITION TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. AL-HAMDI TOLD AL-ASNAJ HOWEVER, THAT HE INFORMED THE SAUDIS THAT IF AL-AHMAR DOES NOT SOON STOP HIS ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES THAT HE WILL MOVE AGAINST AL-AHMAR IN ANY WAY THAT HE SEES FIT AND AT A TIME OF HIS OWN CHOOSING, NO MATTER WHAT OTHERS MIGHT THINK OR DO. AL-ASNAJ SAID THAT AL-HAMDI DID NOT STATE THE ABOVE IN A THREATENING MANNER BUT IN A STRAIGHTFORWARD AND MATTER OF FACT WAY.

2. AL-ASNAJ ALSO SAID THAT DURING THE VISIT AL-HAMDI HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO KHALID AL-SUDAIRI, GOVERNOR OF NAJRAN AND MAIN SAUDI CONTACT WITH DISSIDENT TRIBAL

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ELEMENTS IN THE NORTH. AL-ASNAJ SAID THAT MUCH TO SUDAIRI'S SHOCK, THE PRESIDENT SPOKE VERY FRANKLY TO HIM, ADVISING HIM THAT IF SAUDI SUPPORT FOR THE TRIBAL SHAYKHS CONTINUES THAT THIS WILL RESULT IN CIVIL WAR IN YEMEN. HE WONDERED IF THIS WHAT SUDAIRI IS SEEKING. AL-ASNAJ SAID THAT SUDAIRI DENIED THIS CHARGE BUT WAS VISIBLY SHAKEN BY THE PRESIDENT'S ACCUSATION.

3. AL-ASNAJ CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT AL-HAMDI WILL NOW DO RE AL-AHMAR BUT HE WAS SURE THAT AL-HAMDI COULD NOT CONTINUE TO TOLERATE THE SITUATION IN THE NORTH FOR MUCH LONGER.

4. COMMENT: THUS, THE MAJOR SOURCE OF TENSION IN SAUDI/YEMENI RELATIONS CONTINUES, DESPITE THE EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY THE RIYADH MEETING AFFORDED TO WORK OUT SOME MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT AL-HAMDI WILL PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY BEFORE HE MAKES ANY OVERT MOVES AGAINST AL-AHMAR. AT THE SAME TIME I ALSO SENSE THAT HIS PATIENCE MAY NOW BE RUNNING OUT. I WILL NOT BE SURPRISED, THEREFORE, IF AL-HAMDI BEGINS TO INCREASE THE PRESSURES ON AL-AHMAR OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS IN A VARIETY OF WAYS BUT SHORT OF A DIRECT MILITARY CONFRONTATION. THE LATTER, HOWEVER, MUST NOT BE RULLED OUT, PARTICULARLY IF THE SITUATION IN AND AROUND SANA CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE, AS RECENT REPORTS REACHING SANA SAY IT IS.
SCOTES

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